

# Konkomba language

The **Konkomba** language (Likpakpaln) is a type of Gurma language spoken in Ghana and Togo.

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| <b>Contents</b>                  |
| <b>Dialects and literature</b>   |
| <b>Linguistic classification</b> |
| <b>Grammar</b>                   |
| <b>Spelling and orthography</b>  |
| Alphabet                         |
| Capital letters                  |
| Lower-case letters               |
| Vowels                           |
| Phonology                        |
| <b>Sample text in Likpakpaln</b> |
| <b>See also</b>                  |
| <b>References</b>                |

## Dialects and literature

The Konkomba language, known natively as **Likpakpaln**, is spoken by the Konkomba people, who are also known as the Bikpakpaam. The Konkomba language has several dialects, including, but not limited to, Lichaboil, Ligbeln, Likoonli, Limonkpeln and Linafeel.<sup>[3][4]</sup>

The dialects of Konkomba emerged because different families and groups settled together and adopted unique pronunciation and vocabulary patterns, forming what could be called uniform dialect groupings. For example, "map geek" in (in the Lichabol dialect), "may LAK Iya" (in the Limonkpeln dialect), and "many men" (in the Likoon dialect) all mean "I don't like that". This type of variation can be heard in Likpakpaln, depending on the geographic area or what clan is dominant in a particular settlement. However, Lichaboil dialect is the written variety. Other Bikpakpaam dialects classifications include Linankpel (Nankpantiib), Likpalil (Bikpalib), Linandeln (Binandim), Lisagmaln (Sagmantiib), and Linalol (Binalob).

A reasonable amount of Likpakpaln literature exists. This literature includes primers for teaching, a dictionary, storybooks, and folk tales. There is also a full translation of the Bible in Likpakpaln, created through the work of GILLBT and GIL, Mary Steele, and RILADEP (formerly KOLADEP, Konkomba Literacy and Development Project). Work on the Likpakpaln Bible translation was started by Mary Steele in 1962 when she arrived to work with the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

| Konkomba          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Likpakpaln</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Region            | Ghana, Togo                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Native speakers   | 900,000 (2003–2012) <sup>[1]</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Language family   | Niger–Congo <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Atlantic–Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Volta-Congo<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gur<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Northern Gur<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Oti–Volta<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Gurma<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Konkomba</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul> |
| Writing system    | Latin (Konkomba alphabet) <div>Konkomba Braille</div>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Language codes    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| ISO 639-3         | xon                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Glottolog         | konk1269 ( <span>http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/konk1269</span> ) <sup>[2]</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

| People   | Bikpakpaam |
|----------|------------|
| Language | Likpakpaln |

# Linguistic classification

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Likpakpaln is coded in ISO 639-3 as xon. Likpakpaln is a genetic affiliate of the Niger-Congo phylum. Taking a cue from Naden,<sup>[5]</sup> one can derive the genetic root of Likpakpaln as represented below:

Niger Congo → Proto-Gur → Central Gur → Oti Volta → Gurma → Likpakpaln.

Within the Gurma linguistic circle, the closest languages to Likpakpaln are Bimoba (spoken by the Bimoba people) and Bassari (spoken by the Bassari people).

## Grammar

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Likpakpaln is a Subject–verb–object language.

## Spelling and orthography

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### Alphabet

#### Capital letters

A, B, CH, D, E, F, G, GB, I, J, K, KP, L, M, N, NY, ŋ, DM, O, ɔ, P, R, S, T, U, W, Y.

#### Lower-case letters

a, b, ch, d, e, f, g, gb, i, j, k, kp, l, m, n, ny, ŋ, ɲm, o, ɔ, p, r, s, t, u, w, y.

The orthography follows that used in the literature currently in print in Likpakpaln. Under the current convention, long and short vowels are distinguished by the use of single and double letters respectively. (e.g. a, aa). Tone is not marked, but where two words contrast only in tone and the context is unlikely to indicate a distinction in meaning, an "h" is added after the vowel in one of the words (e.g. upii – woman, upiih – sheep).

Certain variations that may occur in the a given speaker's speech. For example, sometimes a speaker may use the /r/ sound and sometimes the /l/ sound. Also, there may be variations between one speaker and another within the same village (e.g. some use the plural tiib and some teeb). This is, however, at the phonological level and does not affect semantic interpretation.

### Vowels

The vowels are: a, e, i, o, ɔ, u.

### Phonology

Letters and sounds are organized as shown below.<sup>[6]</sup> The format shows a Roman Alphabet letter, followed by a similar sound in English, followed by an example showing a Likpakpaln word containing a similar sound, followed by the meaning of the word in English.

a (as in father) e.g.: n-na (my mother)  
 b (as in boy) e.g. ubo (a child)  
 ch (as in church) e.g. chapiln (forgive)  
 d (as in dog) e.g. da (buy)  
 e (eight) e.g. kpe (add)  
 f (as in fish) e.g. falaa (suffering)  
 g (as in go) e.g. gaa (take)  
 gb (there is no similar sound in English) e.g. gbi (dig)  
 h (as in hat) e.g. haali (even)  
 I (as in feet) e.g. ipii (sheep)  
 j (as in Jack) e.g. kijuk (knife)  
 k (as in kitchen) e.g. kiyiik (calabash)  
 kp (there is no similar sound in English) e.g. uninkpil (elder/chief/boss)  
 l (as in lady) e.g. lafee (health)  
 m (as in man) e.g. limual (a river)  
 n (as in net) e.g. linuul (Yam)  
 ŋ (as in sin''g'' e.g. ŋaan (cook/boil)  
 ŋm (there is no similar sound in English, the closest however is the sound of a kiss, gmmmmaaaaaaa) e.g.  
 ŋmɔ (Chew)  
 ny (there is no similar sound in English but there is a similar sound in French as in ɪgnam (yam)) e.g.  
 nya (go out/get out)  
 o (as in no) e.g. lijol (mountain/plateau/highland)  
 ɔ (as in paw/log/ball/pawpaw) e.g. mɔk (show/teach)  
 p (as in pick) e.g. paacham (up/above/on top)  
 r (as in rock) e.g. ipaar (benefit/profit)  
 s (as in sit) e.g. kisaak (a farm)  
 t (as in tip) e.g. litakpaal (a stone/rock)  
 u (as in loop) e.g. likuul (a hoe/a tape/CD/DVD)  
 w (as in wish) e.g. Uwumbɔr (God)  
 y (as in yes) e.g. liyimbil (a name).

## Sample text in Likpakpaln

The following is a sample portion of the Holy Bible translated into Likpakpaln, along with the corresponding passage in English:

"Yesu aah kan kinipaak ngbaan na, le u jon ligongoln paab, le ki kal. Le waadidiliib kuun u chee. Le u waar umɔɔ ki bui bi ke: 'Binib bi nyi ke bi ye bigiim Uwumbɔr wɔɔ na, waanyoor bi bi pu. Bima le yeh Uwumbɔr aanaan. Binib bi kpa mpombiin baatunwanbir pu na, Uwumbɔr aanyoor bi bi pu; u ga ɔŋ bisui. Binib bi sunn bibaa taab na, Uwumbɔr aanyoor bi bi pu. Bima le ga li yeh dulnyaa wee. Binib bi aanimbil man ke bi li ye bininyaam na, Uwumbɔr aanyoor bi bi pu. Binimbil ga gbiin. Binib bi kpa linimbaasaln na, Uwumbɔr aanyoor bi bi pu. U mu ga san bi kinimbaak. Binib bi dii Uwumbɔr ni bisui mɔmɔk na, waanyoor bi bi pu. Bima le ga kan uma Uwumbɔr. Binib bi par kijaak na, Uwumbɔr aanyoor bi bi pu. U ga len ke bi ye waabim. Binib bi ji falaa Uwumbɔr aasan aadiim pu na, waanyoor bi bi pu. Bima le yeh uma Uwumbɔr aanaan.'"

— Matiu 5:1–10 XONB<sup>[7]</sup>

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"

— Matthew 5:1–10 NKJV<sup>[8]</sup>

## See also

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- Konkomba people
- Languages of Ghana

## References

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